

## ON-GROWTH INHIBITING COMPOUNDS

The present invention relates to compounds, methods and agents, for preventing or inhibiting on-growth of living organisms on surfaces in general, e.g. on physical objects and/or living beings, such as barnacles on marine structures, micro-organisms forming bio-films on e.g. medical equipment, and on living animals, such as fish in fish cultures.

### Background of the invention and prior art

The solution of the severe technical and economical problem caused by marine fouling organisms, e.g. barnacles, blue mussels, algae and hydroids, for the shipping industry and in aquaculture has been the use of TBTO (tri-n-butyl tin oxide), copper oxide and herbicides in marine coatings. However, several of these have been recognised to be toxic against non-fouling marine organisms. For example, TBTO has been ascribed effects such as reproduction failure and decrease in adult growth in oysters and the development of imposex in gastropods such as the dog whelk. Because of these unwanted side effects, the use of TBTO will be stopped by future bans; the International Marine Organisation will recommend a global ban from the year 2005. Therefore it is urgent to find new non-toxic alternatives which exert a specific action on target organisms and which also are biodegradable.

Craik et al in WO 01/27147 discloses a novel cyclic molecular framework comprising i.a. so called cyclotides, i.e. cyclic peptides. These compounds are claimed to be usable for treatment or prophylaxis of disease conditions in animals, mammals and plants.

WO 00/68265 (Ouelette et al ) discloses pharmaceutical compounds based on cyclic peptides.

WO 99/21879 (Chang et al) discloses cyclic peptides having antimicrobial and antibacterial activity.

## Summary of the invention

I.a. in view of the toxicity of the presently used compounds for preventing on-growth on i.a. marine structures, it would be desirable to have access to non-toxic substances, which do not accumulate in the environment, and which do not intervene irreversibly in the natural biological/ecological systems.

One promising approach to find new non-toxic antifouling agents has been to explore natural compounds occurring in the marine environment, especially those produced by marine organisms free from fouling. The present inventors have shown that this search among biologically active natural products may be expanded to terrestrial ones as well, by the potent, antifouling effect against barnacles (*Balanus amphitrite*, *Darwin*) of the plant peptide cycloviolacin O2, isolated from the Sweet violet, *Viola odorata* L. (Violaceae).

This peptide is one member of the family of cyclotides, which today consist of almost 50 members. Their main character is their cyclic cystine knot; their amino acid backbone is circular and thus they lack both N- and C-terminals, and they all contain six cysteine residues involved in three disulfide bridges in a knotted arrangement. In combination with their size, ranging from 28-37 amino acid residues, these structural features renders the cyclotide peptides an extreme stability. This structural scaffold, unique for the cyclotides, has previously been shown able to mediate a variety of biological activities, such as antimicrobial and insecticidal effects.

The inventors have now surprisingly discovered that the antifouling effect against barnacles of cyclotides, and in particular cycloviolacin O2 is, in contrast to the existing antifouling agents on the market today, is non-toxic and reversible.

Thus, the present invention in its broadest aspect, which provides a novel on-growth inhibiting agent comprising a class of compounds having an on-growth inhibiting and preventing effect, is defined in claim 1.

In a further aspect of the invention, an extract from a member of the Violaceae family of plants having on-growth inhibiting and preventing properties, is defined in claim 9.

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In a still further aspect there is provided a method of preventing on-growth of organisms in general, including larvae, bacteria, viruses, and fungi on physical objects or on living beings, said method being defined in claim 11.

## 10 **Brief Description of the Drawings**

The invention will now be further illustrated with reference to the attached drawings wherein

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Figure 1 illustrates the isolation by ion exchange chromatography. Cyclotides with a basic net charge was effectively captured by strong cation exchange chromatography. After elution of non charged substances, the bound peptides, here marked \*, were eluted in a NaCl gradient (0-1 M). A solvent composition of 25% AcN, 0.1% TFA in water was used; the addition of AcN was shown to promote ionic interactions.

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Figure 2 shows the antifouling effect of cycloviolacin O2. The settlement was inhibited in a dose-dependent manner. At 0.25  $\mu\text{M}$  cycloviolacin O2 there was a complete inhibition of settlement. No one of the tested concentrations showed an increase in mortality compared to the control (saltwater only). All concentrations were tested in quadruplicates.

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Figure 3 demonstrates the reversibility test. Compared to the control, a lower percentage of settlement was seen of cypris transferred from 2.5  $\mu\text{M}$  cycloviolacin O2. This is however a normal behaviour after long incubation times, in this case 3+5 days, and may be explained by exhaustion. No increase in mortality was observed. All concentrations were tested in quadruplicates.

Figure 4 illustrates effect on settlement of Fraction P from an extraction process performed on Sweet Violet.

5 Figure 5 illustrates effect on settlement of Fraction I from Sweet Violet.

### Detailed description of the invention

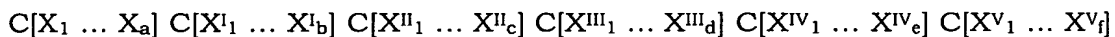
10 The invention is based on the discovery that a cyclopeptide designated cyclovio-  
lacin 02, extracted from the Sweet Violet, *Viola odorata* L., has an anti-fouling  
effect against larvae from barnacles, i.e. on-growth of barnacles on e.g. boat  
hulls is inhibited and even prevented, this effect being reversible.

15 The mechanism of action is unknown at this stage. However, without wishing to  
be bound by theory, it is believed that the effect may be due to a inhibition at  
the early stage of folding, that is prevention of the formation of a biofilm of mi-  
croorganisms that preceeds settling of macroorgansims (such as barnacles).  
This possibility is supported by earlier observations of the antifungal and an-  
timicrobial effect of cyclotides. Hence, it is reasonable to expand the field of the  
20 invention to areas outside the marine environmont, such as an ingredient in  
house paints, to prevent growth in filters and on medical equipment. The same  
is valid even if the mechanism is more specific, i.e. if the cyclotides act by direct  
binding to a molecular target (i.e. a receptor or an enzyme) which in turn repells  
the settling organsim(s). The latter theory is in part supported by the their re-  
25 ported insecticidal activity, that is that they inhibit growth of *Helicoverpa* cater-  
pillars.

30 In its most general form, the invention comprises on-growth inhibiting agents  
comprising one or more compounds selected from the class of compounds des-  
ignated as cyclotides, for the inhibition and/or prevention of on-growth of bio-  
logical organisms on objects or living beings, said agent further comprising a  
suitable carrier medium. An embodiment of the invention comprises an extract  
from plants, preferably from Sweet Violet, comprising a mixture of cyclotides. In

a particular embodiment, the cyclotide cycloviolacin O2 is used as the active agent. Products, in a general sense, comprising physical objects as well as living beings, such as fish, protected by the novel agent is also an aspect of the invention. Also, the method of protecting such products by applying an agent comprising the cyclotide(s), in any of the forms discussed, is part of the inventive concept.

As already discussed above, a cyclotide is a cyclic peptide which is characterized by being fairly small (the known naturally occurring cyclotides have 28-37 amino acids, although the compounds according to the invention shall not be considered limited to any particular number of amino acids), and by containing six cysteine residues forming three disulphide bridges in a knotted arrangement. A schematic representation of a general cyclotide is given in Formula I:



wherein

C is cysteine;

each of  $[X_1 \dots X_a]$ ,  $[X^I_1 \dots X^I_b]$ ,  $[X^{II}_1 \dots X^{II}_c]$ ,  $[X^{III}_1 \dots X^{III}_d]$ ,  $[X^{IV}_1 \dots X^{IV}_e]$ , and  $[X^V_1 \dots X^V_f]$  represents one or more amino acid residues wherein each one or more amino acid residues within or between the sequence residues may be the same or different; and wherein

a, b, c, d, e and f represent the number of amino acid residues in each respective sequence and each of a to f may be the same or different and range from 1 to about 20;

or an analogue of said sequence.

Preferably each of a to f ranges from 1 to about 10.

In a further embodiment a, b, c, d, e and f represent the number of amino acid residues in each respective sequence and wherein a is from about 3 to about 6, b is from about 3 to about 5, c is from about 2 to about 7, d is about 1 to about 3, e is about 3 to about 6, and f is from about 4 to about 9.

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In a still further embodiment a, b, c, d, e and f represent the number of amino acid residues in each respective sequence and wherein a is about 3, b is about 4, c is from about 4 to about 7, d is about 1, e is about 4 or 5, and f is from about 4 to about 7.

10

Another embodiment is provided wherein a, b, c, d, e and f represent the number of amino acid residues in each respective sequence and wherein a is about 6, b is about 4, c is 3, d is about 1, e is about 5, and f is about 8.

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As examples of cyclotides usable according to the invention, the following non-exhaustive and non-limiting listing of a number of known cyclotides is given.

Thus, any of vico A, vico B, hypa A, cycloviolacin O1, cyclopsychotride A, cycloviolacin O7, circulin D, circulin E, cycloviolin C, cycloviolacin O3, cycloviolacin O9, cycloviolacin O10, cycloviolacin H1, circulin C, cycloviolin A, cycloviolin D, circulin F, circulin A, circulin B, cycloviolacin O2, cycloviolacin O4, cycloviolacin O6, cycloviolacin O11, cycloviolacin O8, cycloviolacin O5, kalata B5, cycloviolin B, varv A, kalata S, kalata B1, kalata B4, varv E, cycloviolacin O12, varv D, varv C, varv B, varv G, varv H, kalata B2, kalata B3, kalata B6, varv F, kalata B7, alone or in combination can be used in the on-growth inhibiting agent according to the invention.

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The actual amino acid sequence for these compounds can be found in Table 4, in the doctoral thesis by Ulf Göransson, "Macrocylic Polypeptides from Plants" (ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS UPPSALA 2002), page 36.

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The particular peptide tested in the Examples below, cycloviolacin O2, belongs to the family of cyclic plant peptides recently named cyclotides. It was isolated from the dried aerial part of the plant *Viola odorata* through already established

techniques for cyclotide isolation in combination with strong cation exchange chromatography. The latter was shown to be an efficient complementary method for capture of cyclotides containing a positive net charge (Figure 1). The rapidly growing family today consists of about 50 different peptides, mainly isolated from the Violaceae and Rubiaceae plant families.

The number of cyclotides known to occur in the family of Violaceae, and their high degree of sequence homology, made molecular weight alone insufficient for absolute identification after isolation of the peptide. Hence, it was modified by introduction of charged cleavage sites on the cysteines, followed by enzymatic digestion to produce peptide fragments suitable for sequencing by MS. After aminopropylation and tryptic cleavage the major part of the sequence was obtained. For full coverage, possible cleavage sites were constrained to modified cysteines only: trypsin was exchanged for endoproteinase LysC to prevent cleavage after the arginine residue, native lysine cleavage sites were protected by acetylation, and finally, cysteines were aminoethylated instead of aminopropylated to better suit the chosen enzyme. After this, the full sequence could be determined to cyclo-(VWIPCISSAIGCSCKSKVCYRNGIPCGESC), unambiguously identifying the peptide as the previously reported cycloviolacin O2.

A wide variety of effects has previously been ascribed to the cyclotides, including antimicrobial, HIV-inhibitory, trypsin inhibitory and cytotoxic ones. Their function within the plant however, have not yet been fully elucidated, but probably they are involved in the host defence system. This conjecture was recently supported by Jennings and coworkers, that showed potent insecticidal activities of the cyclotide kalata B1; growth and development of the insect larvae (from *Helicoverpa punctigera*) was shown to be greatly affected in a feeding trial. While this activity seems intriguingly similar in aspect to cycloviolacin O2's ability to inhibit cyprides from fouling; the insect larvae also showed an increase in mortality over time. Though, it may be hypothesized that there might be a common mechanism behind the two findings, and that the difference instead lies in the surrounding environment and its influence to the test organisms ability to give off the peptide; the marine milieu simulated in the antifouling bioassay, is ide-

ally suited to maintain equilibriums of water soluble compounds such as peptides. Indeed, the fact that the antifouling effect is reversible show that such an equilibrium does exist in our system. Hence, the reason that the peptide can be solubilised in the surrounding water may be the simple explanation to the difference in toxicity between these two seemingly related activities.

All of the members of the cyclotide family contain around 30 amino acid residues, organised in the characteristic cyclic cystine knot motif; a head-to-tail cyclised amide backbone further stabilised by three intramolecular disulfide bridges. Through slight variations in the sequences between cysteines—the loops—the plant provide itself with a library of different peptides. This variety of cyclotides may be used to further explore the antifouling effect reported here, as it enables detailed structure activity studies. Such studies may be further expanded by the use of synthetic chemistry developed for cyclotides, to identify which parts or regions of the peptide that is important for activity. Likewise, a similar approach may be used to optimise the sequence to suit a specific formulation or use, for example to covalently bind the cyclotide directly to a surface or into an antifouling paint.

To our knowledge, this is the first disclosure of an evaluation of a natural product from a terrestrial source against fouling barnacles. Moreover, the tested substance represents a class and size of molecules—peptides—that generally are considered non-attractive due to their instability. However, we have isolated a peptide belonging to the cyclotide family, recognised as one of the most stable peptide structures known, with a potency in the same range as TBTO. A complete inhibition of fouling was observed at a concentration of 0.25  $\mu\text{M}$  [EC50 values for TBTO, 0.09  $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$  or 0.15  $\mu\text{M}$ ]. In addition, cycloviolacin O2 showed a distinct advantage compared to both TBTO and any other commercially used antifouling agent of today; the effect is non toxic and reversible.

To conclude, we have shown that the search for antifouling agents may be expanded to natural products from terrestrial sources, exemplified here by the potent activity of the cyclic peptide cycloviolacin O2.



*Anti-fouling products containing the class of inventive compounds*

The novel class of compounds according to the invention can suitably be used  
5 in anti-fouling products for underwater use and such products can be prepared  
by conventional methods.

Cyclotides as defined in the claims can for example be mixed with a binding  
agent such as an organopolysiloxane, e.g. a low molecular mass alkoxy-  
10 functional silicone resin, a silicone rubber or an organosilicon copolymer.

An anti-fouling composition comprising cyclotides according to the invention  
and an organopolysiloxane can additionally comprise inorganic pigments, or-  
ganic pigments, dyes (which are preferably insoluble in salt water) and/or con-  
15 ventional auxiliaries such as fillers, solvents, plasticizers, catalysts, inhibitors,  
tackifiers, coating additives and/or common dispersion auxiliaries.

Other examples of anti-fouling compositions that are meant for use under water  
and that can be used with anti-fouling agents according to the present inven-  
20 tion, are disclosed in US-6 245 784-B1, US-6 217 642-B1, US-6 291 549-B1,  
US-6 211 172-B1 and US-6 172 132-B1.

The final anti-fouling products could be used for underwater structures, e.g. in  
plumbing ports of nuclear power stations, at ocean facilities such as bayshore  
25 roads, undersea tunnels, port facilities, and in canals or channels, machinery  
operated by the power of sea motion (waves), such as power plants. The agents  
according to the invention could also be used for coating marine vessels, fishing  
gear (rope, fishing net or the like).

30 The anti-fouling coating compositions can be applied either directly to the sur-  
face of vessel hulls and underwater structures or applied to the surface of ves-  
sel hulls and underwater structures pre-coated with undercoating material  
such as rust preventive and a primer.

The anti-fouling coating compositions may also be used to repair surfaces of vessel hulls and underwater structures previously coated with a conventional anti-fouling paint or anti-fouling coating composition.

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Other structures and devices that can be protected by the novel agents are exemplified by membranes, pumps, filters etc employed in the biotechnology process industry.

10 Further fields of use that are possible are the protection of medical equipment from the on-growth of bio film, i.e. bacterial and/or microbial adhesion on the surface of devices such as surgical instruments, tubing in contact with body fluids etc.

15 It is also conceivable to protect fish in fish breeding plants from on-growth of unwanted species, e.g. bacteria and/or other organisms having a pathogenic effect on the fish, by the application of an agent according to the invention, either directly to the body of the animal, or by administration in the water or with the fodder. Possibly, also other animals such as cattle could be protected from  
20 infestation or attacks by vermins.

The present invention will now be described by way of examples, based on extraction of active compounds from Sweet Violet, *Viola odorata* L.

## 25 EXAMPLES

General procedures.

HPLC (cation exchange and RP) was done on a Äkta Basic system (Amersham Biosciences, Uppsala, Sweden). Mass spectrometry was done by nanospray-ion  
30 trap MS [Protana's NanoES source (MDS Protana A/S, Odense, Denmark) mounted on a LCQ (Thermo Finnigan, San Jose, USA)] operated in the positive ion mode. Samples were sprayed using a 60% MeOH, 1% HOAc in water; the

capillary temperature was set at 150°C and the spray voltage at 0.5 kV. For MS/MS sequencing the relative CID was typically set at 35%. Unless otherwise stated, average masses were used and given as [M].

## 5 Isolation of cycloviolacin O2.

Dried and grinded plant material (*Viola odorata* L., obtained from Galke, Gittelde, Germany) was defatted with dichloromethane before the main extraction was carried out using 50% aqueous ethanol. This extract was concentrated in vacuo (i.e. all EtOH was removed) then the acidified extract was filtered through polyamide to remove tannins. This is referred to as Fraction P. Subsequently this extract was partitioned between H<sub>2</sub>O and n-BuOH. So far, the isolation procedure was carried out according to Claeson et al in "Fractionation protocol for the isolation of polypeptides from plant biomass", J. Nat. Prod. 61, 77-81, and Broussalis et al in "First cyclotide from Hybanthus (Violaceae)", Phytochemistry 58, 47-51. The BuOH fraction was then evaporated, and redissolved in 25% acetonitrile, 0.1% trifluoroacetic acid in water before pumped through a Vydac sulfonic acid polymeric strong cation exchange column (400VHP575, 5µm, 7.5mm ID x 50 mm) at a flow rate of 1 ml/min, until the binding sites of the gel were saturated. Bound substances were then eluted with a salt gradient, ranging from 0 to 1M NaCl. The peak (referred to as Fraction I) eluting in the salt gradient was collected (Figure 1), and analysed by RP-HPLC and MS, and was found to contain a mixture of peptides. The major peptide was then isolated by means of RP-HPLC in an analogous way as described in the article by Broussalis et al and in Göransson et al, "Seven novel macrocyclic polypeptides from *Viola arvensis*", J. Nat. Prod. 62, 283-6.

LC/MS analysis of Fraction P of *Viola odorata*.

30 The fraction contains a mixture of cyclotides, one of the major components is cycloviolacin O2 which was tested as a pure compound. However, results from testing the fraction itself reveals that a similar activity may be found for other members of the cyclotide family. An LC/MS analysis was performed on this ex-

tract, and is shown in Fig. 6. Some of the identified cyclotides are marked in the chromatogram as folloes: cycloviolacin O2 (marked as 1). These are kalataS/varv peptide A (2); varv peptide D (3); varv peptide E (4); cycloviolacin O9 (5); cycloviolacin O3 (6); cycloviolacin O7 (7), which represent a wide variety of cyclotide sequences.

#### Aminopropylation/aminoethylation.

Peptide (1-5 nmol) was reduced with dithioerythritol (DTE, 390 nmol) in 0.25 M Tris-HCl containing 1 mM EDTA and 6 M guanidine-HCl (pH 8.5; 24°C; 1h). Reduced peptide was then alkylated by the addition of 25 times the amount bromopropylamine/bromoethylamine versus DTE (9.75  $\mu$ mol) dissolved in 10  $\mu$ l of the Tris-HCl buffert. The reaction was then incubated overnight (37°C), after which it was terminated by injection on RP-HPLC.

#### Acetylation of lysines.

Dry peptide (1 nmol) was dissolved in 20  $\mu$ l 50 mM  $\text{NH}_4\text{HCO}_3$ . To this, 50  $\mu$ l of acetic anhydride in methanol (1/3) was added. After 1 hour incubation at room temperature, the mixture was lyophilized to dryness.

#### Larval bioassay.

The brood stock of adult barnacles (*B. improvisus*, Darwin 1854) were allowed to settle on Plexi glass® panels in the sea on a raft outside Tjärnö Marine Biological Laboratory (58°53'N, 11°8'E). Cleaned from epiphytes they were brought to the laboratory and immediately placed in trays with running seawater (salinity 32±1‰). When regularly fed, with nauplii of *Artemia salina*, *B. improvisus* will spawn throughout the year. For larval rearing we used the method according to Berntsson et al., described in "Reduction of barnacle recruitment on micro-textured surfaces: Analysis of effective topographic characteristics and evaluation of skin friction", Biofouling 16, 245-261. The experiment for the evaluation of the effect on settlement and mortality was performed using poly-

styrene Petri dishes ( $\varnothing$  48 mm) to which 10 ml of the peptide dissolved to different concentrations in filtered seawater ( $0.2\ \mu\text{M}$ ,  $32\pm 1\%$ ) was added. Competent cyprids ( $20\pm 2$  ind.) were added to each dish in four replicates and dishes with filtered seawater served as controls. Dishes were maintained for 3-4 days in room temperature after which they were examined under a stereo microscope for attached and metamorphosed individuals and also, for dead cyprids.

Reversibility test.

Half of the number of cyprids in each petri dish incubated at the highest tested concentration,  $2.5\ \mu\text{M}$ , were moved to a petri dish containing 10 ml of fresh seawater. These petridishes, as well as the original ones incubated at this concentration were examined as described above after five days of incubation.

Statistical method

Results are reported as means  $\pm$  standard error and using 1-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA).

## EXAMPLE 1

Isolation and identification of cycloviolacin O2.

Extraction of plant material and isolation of cycloviolacin O2 was carried out as previously described, with the exception of the use of strong cation exchange chromatography, which effectively captured positively charged cyclotides (Figure 1). The peak eluting in the salt gradient was collected, and analysed by RP-HPLC and MS, and was found to contain a mixture of peptides. The major peptide was then isolated by means of RP-HPLC, in analogy with previous isolations of cyclotides.

The molecular weight of the isolated peptide was determined to 3140.4 Da, congruent with the molecular weight of the earlier reported cycloviolacin O2 (calcu-

lated 3140.8). To unambiguously establish its identity, the peptide was digested with trypsin after converting the cysteines of the reduced peptide into its aminopropylated and its acetylated and aminoethylated derivatives. Obtained fragments were then sequenced by MS/MS.

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After aminopropylation and tryptic cleavage, the sequence of 26 out of 31 amino acids in four identified fragments were successfully determined (sorted after masses, all cysteines converted to their aminopropylated derivatives): VCYR [597.5 (MH+)] VWIPC [674.4 (MH+)] ISSAIGC [707.5 (MH+)] and NGIPCGESC [994.5 (MH+)]. The remaining five residues were identified first after acetylation, to protect this particular fragment from internal cleavage, followed by amino-ethylation and tryptic cleavage to KSKVC [691.3, (MH+)]. Together, these MS data gave the following sequence:  
cyclo-(VWIPCISSAIGCSCKSKVCYRNGIPCGESC).

15

## EXAMPLE 2

On-growth inhibiting ("Antifouling") effect of cycloviolacin O2.

- 20 The effect of cycloviolacin O2 on settlement and mortality of *B. improvisus* is shown in Figure 2. The settlement was inhibited in a dose-dependent manner; at the lowest tested concentration (0.0025  $\mu\text{M}$ ), the degree of settlement was the same as in the control (saltwater only) with  $68 \pm 3\%$  and  $67 \pm 3\%$  settlement respectively; at 0.025  $\mu\text{M}$  only  $21 \pm 0.5\%$  of the cyprids settled; and at 0.25  $\mu\text{M}$  cycloviolacin O2 there was a complete inhibition of settlement.

25

The antifouling effect is non-toxic and reversible.

No increase in mortality could be detected even at the highest tested concentration (2.5  $\mu\text{M}$ ), compared to the control (Figure 2). Cyprids incubated at this concentration were then moved into petri dishes containing fresh sea water (without cycloviolacin O2), where they regained their normal behaviour, that is to

30

settle, as shown in Figure 3. After five days of incubation in this solution, 27% of the transferred cyprids had settled. No increase in mortality was observed.

### EXAMPLE 3

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On-growth inhibiting ("Antifouling") effects of *Viola odorata* extracts

Extraction and fractionation of plant material was carried out as previously described (Claeson et al., 1998; Göransson et al., 1999; Broussalis et al., 2001).

10 The peptide enriched crude extract obtained following the established fractionation protocol (i.e. Fraction P) was subjected to cation exchange chromatography, to capture the positively charged cyclotides (Fraction I). Both Fraction P and I were tested for antifouling effect (settling and mortality) of *Balanus improvisus* (Figs. 4 and 5, respectively). When testing Fraction P, settlement was inhibited  
15 in a dose-dependent manner; at lowest concentration (0.001 mg/ml), the degree of settlement was the same as in the control (saltwater only); and at 0.1 mg/ml there was a complete inhibition of settlement. Fraction I also inhibited settlement, but only at 0.1 mg/ml. Fraction I was further purified by means of RP-HPLC and the major cyclotide was isolated (i.e. cycloviolacin O2). The inhibition  
20 on settlement of cycloviolacin O2 is dose-dependent and at 0.25 µM there was a complete inhibition.

### EXAMPLE 4

25 A field test was performed as follows:

Fraction P of *V. odorata* was dissolved in a marine paint (SPF, Loutrec, Lidingö, Sweden) in two different concentrations, 1% and 0.1% (w/w). Plexiglass plates (PMMA, polymethylmetacrylate) of 11 x 11 cm were then coated with 2 ml in a  
30 single layer of respective paint. A set of plates were painted with paint only and served as controls, and all experiments were done in quadruplicates. After drying, the plates were randomly fixed to ropes, attached in one end to a buoy and in the other to a weight, which were deployed in the sea in a bay outside Tjärnö

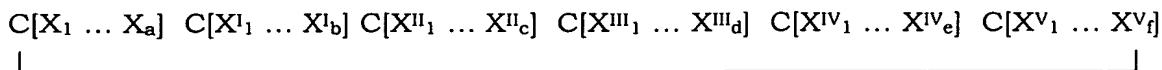
Marine Biological Laboratory (58°53'N, 11°8'E) in August 2003. A set of 4 plates (of each concentration and control) were brought to the lab after 4 and 8 weeks, respectively, and examined for settled barnacles. No settling could be observed for the dishes coated with paint containing Fraction P.



## CLAIMS:

1. On-growth inhibiting agent, for the inhibition and/or prevention of on-growth of biological organisms on objects or living beings, said agent comprising  
 5 at least one cyclotide, and a suitable carrier medium.

2. Agent according to claim 1, said cyclotide(s) having the general formula



wherein

C is cysteine;

15 each of  $[X_1 \dots X_a]$ ,  $[X^I_1 \dots X^I_b]$ ,  $[X^{II}_1 \dots X^{II}_c]$ ,  $[X^{III}_1 \dots X^{III}_d]$ ,  $[X^{IV}_1 \dots X^{IV}_e]$ , and  $[X^V_1 \dots X^V_f]$  represents one or more amino acid residues wherein each one or more amino acid residues within or between the sequence residues may be the same or different; and wherein

20 a, b, c, d, e and f represent the number of amino acid residues in each respective sequence and each of a to f may be the same or different and range from 1 to about 20;

or an analogue of said sequence.

25 3. Agent according to claim 1, wherein each of a to f ranges from 1 to about 10.

30 4. Agent according to claim 1, wherein a, b, c, d, e and f represent the number of amino acid residues in each respective sequence and wherein a is from about 3 to about 6, b is from about 3 to about 5, c is from about 2 to about 7, d is about 1 to about 3, e is about 3 to about 6, and f is from about 4 to about 9.

5. Agent according to claim 1, wherein a, b, c, d, e and f represent the number of amino acid residues in each respective sequence and wherein a is about 3, b is about 4, c is from about 4 to about 7, d is about 1, e is about 4 or 5, and f is from about 4 to about 7.

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6. Agent according to claim 1, wherein a, b, c, d, e and f represent the number of amino acid residues in each respective sequence and wherein a is about 6, b is about 4, c is 3, d is about 1, e is about 5, and f is about 8.

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7. Agent according to claim 1, comprising any of the following cyclotides alone or in combination: vico A, vico B, hypa A, cycloviolacin O1, cyclopsychotride A, cycloviolacin O7, circulin D, circulin E, cycloviololin C, cycloviolacin O3, cycloviolacin O9, cycloviolacin O10, cycloviolacin H1, circulin C, cycloviololin A, cycloviololin D, circulin F, circulin A, circulin B, cycloviolacin O2, cycloviolacin O4, cycloviolacin O6, cycloviolacin O11, cycloviolacin O8, cycloviolacin O5, kalata B5, cycloviololin B, varv A, kalata S, kalata B1, kalata B4, varv E, cycloviolacin O12, varv D, varv C, varv B, varv G, varv H, kalata B2, kalata B3, kalata B6, varv F, kalata B7.

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8. Agent according to claim 1, wherein the cyclotide is cycloviolacin O2.

9. A plant extract, comprising a fraction from an extraction process containing a mixture of cyclotides.

25

10. A plant extract as claimed in claim 9, obtained from Sweet Violet.

11. A method of preventing on-growth of biological organisms on objects or living beings, comprising applying an agent as claimed in claim 1 or an extract as claimed in claim 9 on a surface of said object or living being.

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12. A product, protected from on-growth of biological organisms by the application of an agent as claimed in claim 1 or an extract as claimed in claim 10 on a surface thereof.

**ABSTRACT**

The invention relates to an on-growth inhibiting agent, for the inhibition and/or prevention of on-growth of biological organisms on objects or living beings, said  
5 agent comprising at least one cyclotide, and a suitable carrier medium. A plant extract containing a mixture of cyclotides is also usable.

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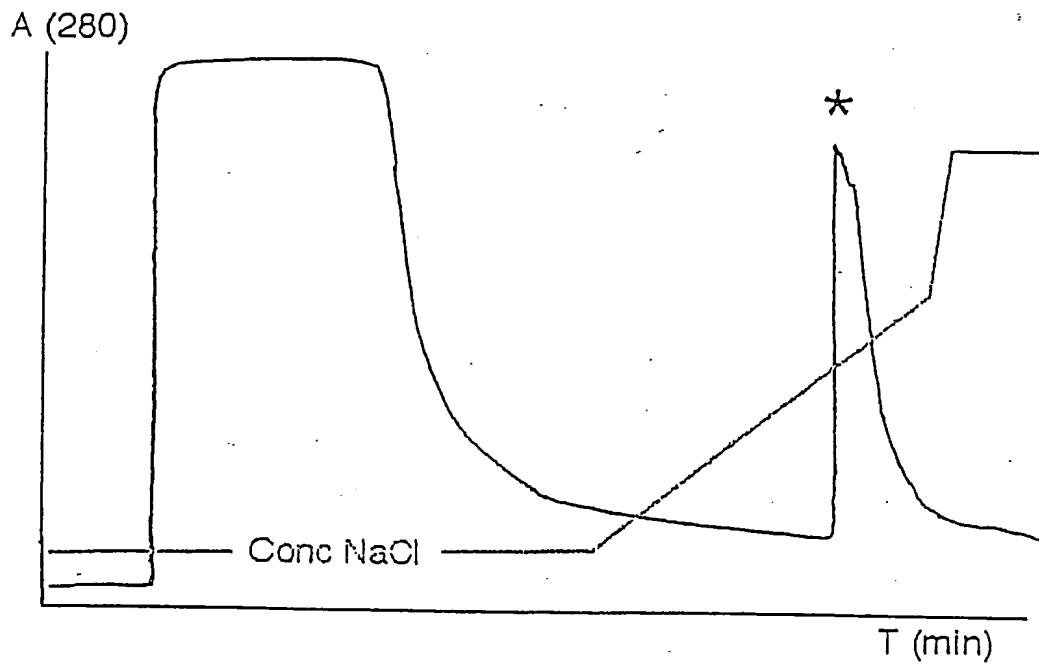


Fig. 1

Antifouling effect of Cycloviolacin O2

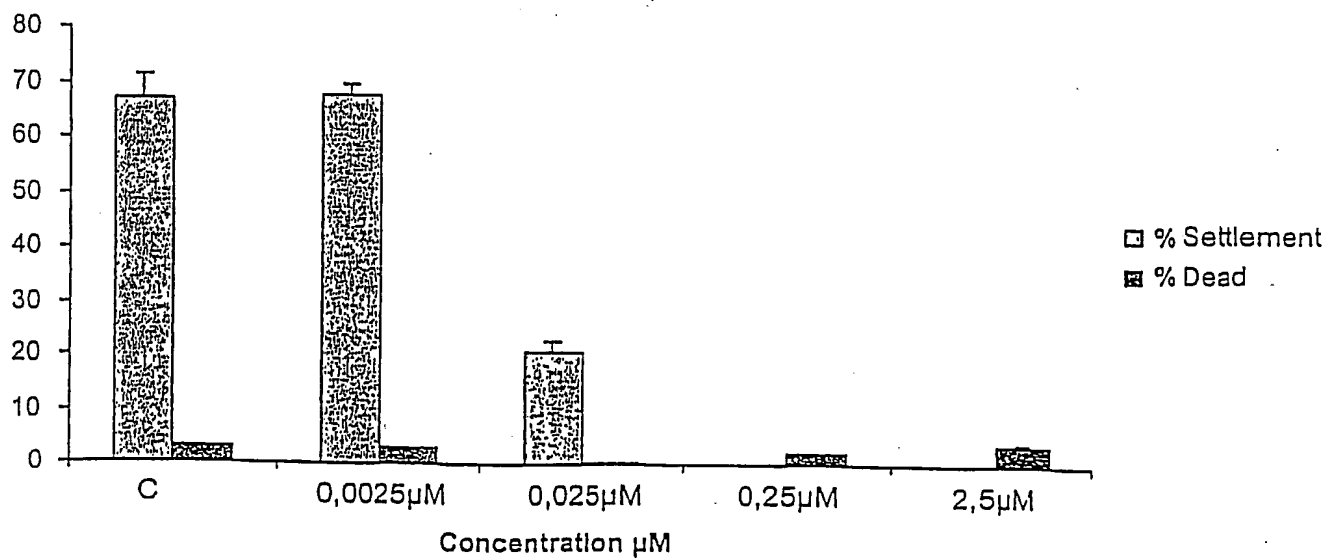


Fig. 2

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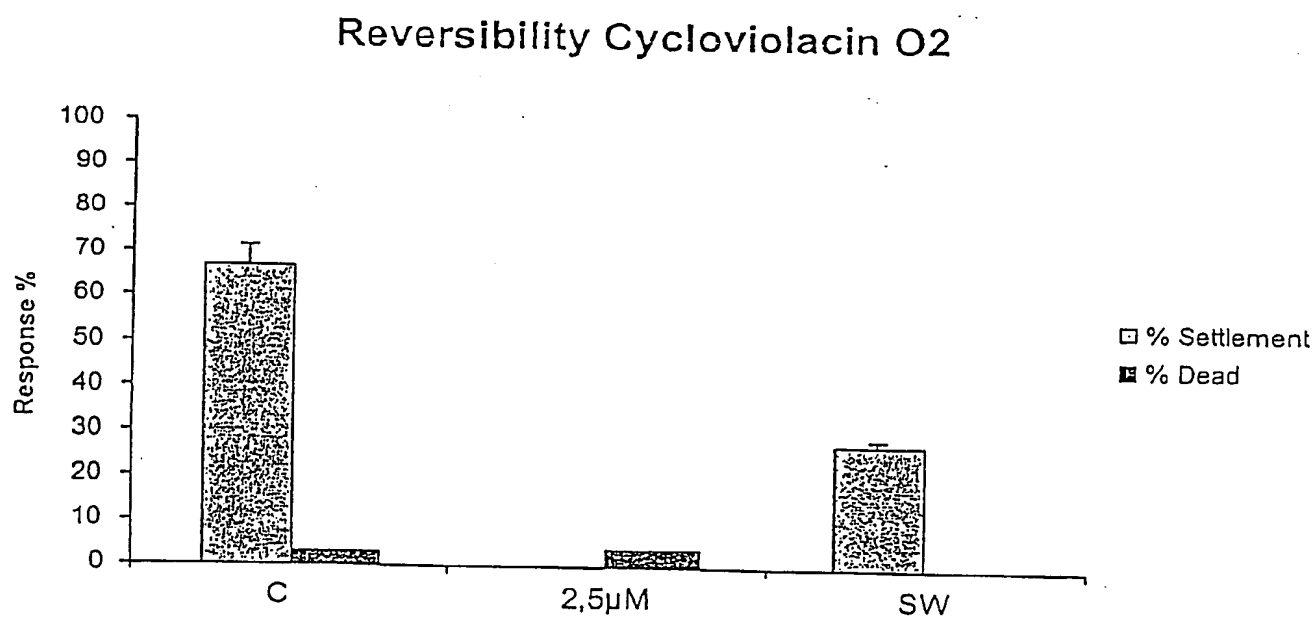
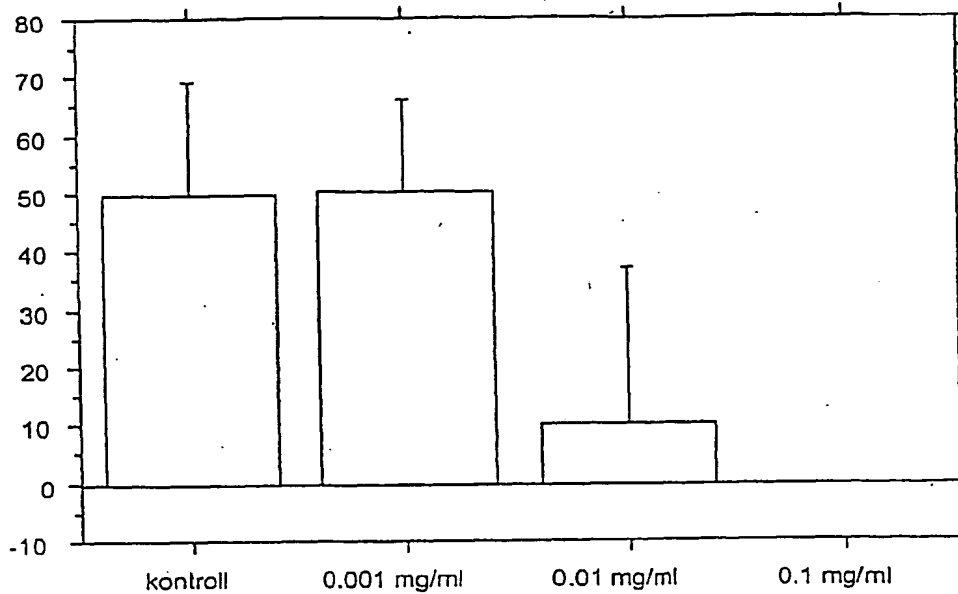
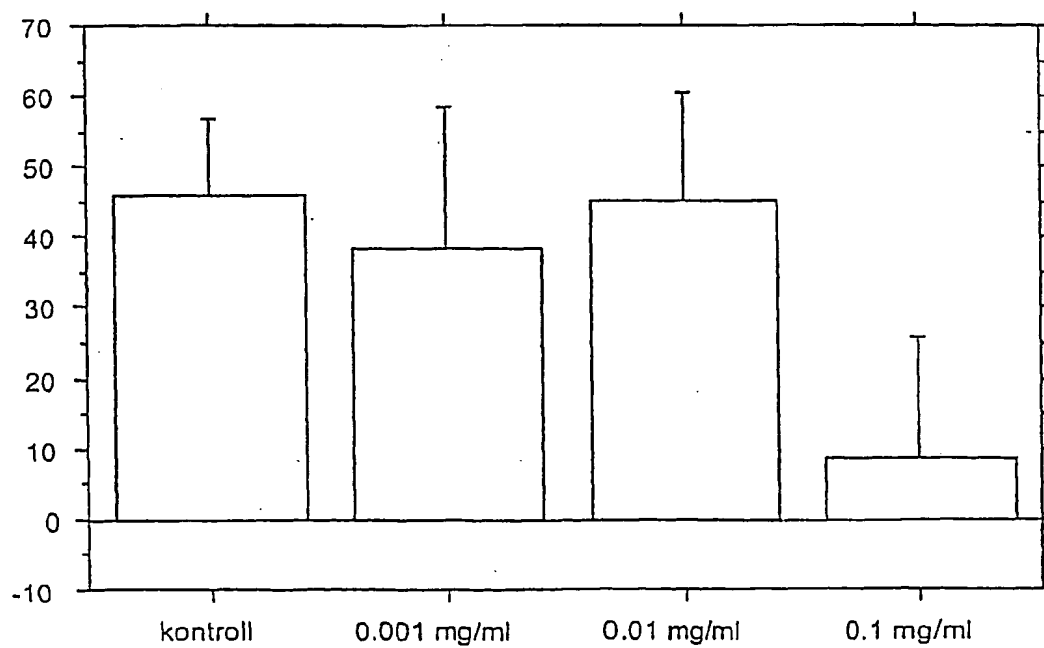


Fig. 3

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**Fig. 4**



**Fig. 5**

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**Fig. 6**